

PAST Program Is Present!

Susan Escherich

The new PAST (Preservation and Skills Training) program has gotten underway with the first group training session held in Hagerstown, Maryland on July 20-28, 1993. PAST was approved by the NPS regional directors in July of 1992, as a way of improving stewardship of historic buildings and structures in the parks. The two-year program offers individualized training in historic preservation and historic craft skills to maintenance workers who deal with these buildings on a day to day basis. The goal is to prevent further deterioration by carrying out maintenance that is sensitive to the historic character of the buildings and structures. As the skills of the maintenance force improve, so will the ability of the NPS to arrest our growing preservation backlog. Eventually, at least one maintenance employee trained in historic preservation should be available for each park with historic resources; each of these trainees will also be able to pass on his or her skills to other employees, reinforcing the knowledge of and appreciation for historic resources.

Eleven excellent mentors and twenty highly motivated trainees were selected for the first class from those recommended by their supervisors. All of the mentors have been acclaimed for their skill in carpentry or masonry and for their commitment to historic preservation. Most have had experience either teaching one-on-one or in groups. Mentors for the pilot 1993-1995 class include two masons and eight carpenters from five parks and five regional offices. The twenty trainees, chosen from 75 names submitted by their regions, include maintenance workers in wage grades 4-9 in addition to a WL 6 and a GS 7. There are four women trainees and one woman mentor. Selection was based on the needs of the parks and regions as well as on the interest and qualifications of the applicants.

Trainees' supervisors have committed to allowing the trainees to work on projects in their parks which will let them learn and practice historic craft skills and techniques. Mentors will be visiting and supervising the trainees approximately two days during each of the ten months of each year when there is no group training. As the trainees' abilities expand, it is hoped that they will be assigned to work on historic structures as much as feasible within their overall job context. This will allow the parks to gain maximum benefit from the new program.

Trainees and mentors will be sent to one or two week group training sessions in January and July during each two year cycle. The first course stressed historic preservation approaches to maintenance. Subsequent courses will focus on carpentry, masonry and painting, so that all students will have basic training in these skills from an historic craft perspective. Their one-on-one training with the mentors will focus on carpentry or masonry,

depending upon what they selected when they applied. In addition to the benefits to the parks, PAST provides an exciting chance to upgrade our maintenance workers' skills and career opportunities.

Who are the PAST Mentors?

Jake Barrow, Supervisory Exhibits Specialist, Division of Conservation, Southwest Regional Office. Jake has been a carpenter for 23 years, 13 of them with the NPS. He also has taken stone conservation courses in Venice and has consulted on the conservation of the Lincoln and Jefferson memorials in Washington. One of Jake's recent projects was the conservation of the stone column at Mission San Jose in San Antonio Missions NHP which included consolidation and reattachment of deteriorating sandstone. Jake appreciates working with the NPS because of the diversity of the challenge: he says he works on projects that would never be available in the private sector. In the future, Jake looks forward to accomplishing an 18th century plaster conservation project at San Antonio Missions, developing a long term conservation program for a structure at Fort Davis NHS, and, over the long term, to developing a field architectural fabric conservation program in the Southwest Region. He will be mentoring Michael McNerney at Bent's Old Fort in Colorado, and Pamela Meck in Walnut Canyon National Monument in Arizona.



Dan Brown, Carpenter, Golden Gate National Recreation Area. Dan Brown, whose hometown is San Francisco, has been with the NPS 14 years, working first at Point Reyes and then at Golden Gate. Dan's most interesting projects in the past have been Williamsport Training Center projects at Morganroth Cabin in Olympic National Park and at Empire Ranch outside Tucson, Arizona. Dan would like to become part of a preservation team for the Western Region some day. He volunteered to be a mentor not only to share his knowledge but also to pass on his enthusiasm for preservation. Dan will be mentoring Charles Schultheis, who also works at Golden Gate, and Doug Cap from Chiricahua National Monument in Arizona.

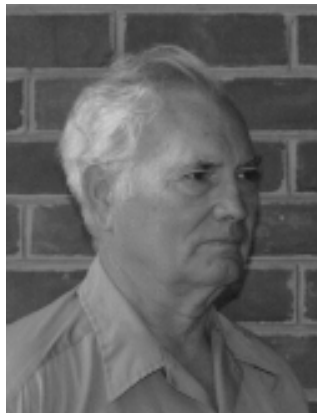


Barry Caldwell, Exhibit Specialist, Historic Architecture Division, Southeast Regional Office.

Barry, who specializes in restoration carpentry, has been with the NPS for 11 years. He was a student at the Williamsport Training Center from 1984 to 1985. Barry reports that his most interesting project in the past was to build a 100-foot, free-span covered bridge. Barry volunteered to be a mentor to share the knowledge he's gained in preservation with others. Barry is one of two back-up mentors this first year, but will be assigned his own trainees in the second PAST class which begins in July 1994.



Frank Doyle, Mason, Independence National Historic Park. Frank has been a union member for 47 years; he became a journeyman bricklayer at age 19. He is the only bricklayer at Independence, where he works on 41 buildings and 10 acres of brick paving. Frank figures he has laid over a million bricks in his time! Frank was Director of Masonry Relations for the Structural Clay Products Institute, Region III for five years. He developed a program and curricula for apprentice training and for vocational schools. Frank decided to volunteer as a mentor to try something different and learn something new. He looks forward to working with his trainees, Rick Maestas at Manassas National Battlefield and Jesse Sherrod at Fort McHenry.



Keith Edge, Maintenance Mechanic, Grant-Kohrs Ranch National Historic Site. Keith has been a journeyman carpenter for 25 years, and has worked at Grant-Kohrs for 2-1/2 years. Keith is an experienced teacher. He studied at Williamsport Preservation Training Center in 1992, and participated in a Williamsport-funded training project at Grant-Kohrs which involved the repair of 58 window sash. Keith will be mentoring Steven Giese in his own park at Grant-Kohrs and William Thompson at Yellowstone National Park. Keith feels that the PAST program will be a highly successful way to exchange knowledge among mentors and trainees.



Michael Fortin, Senior Exhibit Specialist, Cultural Resources Center, North Atlantic Regional Office.

Mike has been with the National Park Service for 25 years since he began at Hawthorne's Wayside. He has worked at the Cultural Resources Center since it opened in 1968; this allows him to work at different NPS sites doing a variety of unusual projects. Some of his most interesting projects



were at the Wayside Minute Man Park, the Old North Bridge and Hartwell Tavern at Minute Man National Historical Park, and the home of Augustus Saint Gaudens at Cornish, NH. He also enjoyed restoring a 6' wooden eagle on the customs house at Salem Maritime National Historic Site. Mike is a skilled teacher who looks forward to sharing his knowledge with PAST trainees in order to develop and enhance the NPS preservation work force. He will be working with all the trainees in the NARO program: Scott Fletcher, Austin Price, Cynthia Moore, Charles Ziets, Kent Garland, Ken Kasner, and Stanley Zielenski.

Ross Hunt, Historic Architecture Division, Southeast Regional Office.

Ross has been a mason for 15 years, five of them with the NPS. He comes from San Antonio, TX, where he did extensive work on the Alamo and Spanish missions. He has worked throughout the Southeast Region: two of his most memorable projects were disassembling and reconstructing a large monument at Guilford Courthouse



NMP and partial reconstruction of the Reef Bay Greathouse in the Virgin Islands. Ross is working with the PAST program to expose motivated NPS employees to correct preservation philosophy and foster a desire to learn and study and develop themselves. He will be working with James Davis at Natchez NHP and Rodney Prioleau at Fort Sumter NM. In the future, Ross would

like to be a facility manager or masonry consultant in the NPS, or possibly a cultural resource manager.

Bruce Koslowski, Masonry Worker, Fort Larned National Historic Site. Bruce worked as a mason in the private sector until he came to Fort Larned in 1980. He is proud of the



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work he has done on the restoration of Fort Larned, where he found work on the Commanding Officer's Quarters particularly interesting. He also enjoyed working on the Varnum's Quarters Spring House at Valley Forge, PA and on the Cemetery Wall at Fredericksburg, VA. Bruce was originally from Albuquerque. During the 19th century, his family owned land that is now part of Pecos National Historical Park, where he will be mentoring Christina Armijo. Bruce will also be working with Darren Bryant from Guadalupe Mountains National Park. Bruce feels that he benefits himself by teaching and helping with masonry projects in other parks so he can keep up his skills; he hopes to continue doing restoration and preservation, and to expand his training activities.

Charlie Masten, Exhibits Specialist, Midwest Regional Office.

Charlie, who is a native of Michigan, says that one of his biggest preservation challenges so far was stripping 120 years of paint off the copper domed roof of the AuSable Lighthouse, 100' above Lake Superior at Pictured Rocks National Lakeshore. Charlie is a strong preservation advocate. He would like to get an advanced degree in Historic Architecture or Preservation, and someday to help set up an NPS Preservation Center in the Midwest Region, similar to those in the Northeast, Southeast and Southwest Regions. Charlie would like to develop preservation training courses and teaching aids such as videos and preservation briefs. Charlie will be mentoring Paul Taylor, at Lincoln Boyhood National Memorial, and Michele Cefola at Harry S Truman National Historic Site.



Charles Moss, Carpenter, San Antonio Missions National Historic Park.

Charles, originally from Memphis, TN, has been at San Antonio Missions for five years. An experienced teacher, he signed up for the PAST program to share his skills in woodworking, and also to continue his own learning. Charles has found restoring historic doors and gates, and making models of the missions particularly interesting. Charles will be a back-up mentor for the first year, with the opportunity to mentor his own trainees in the class beginning in July 1994.



Lisa Sasser, Assistant Chief Historic Architect, Park Historic Architecture, Washington Office. Lisa has been with the NPS for nearly 16 years. She worked at Williamsport Training Center in Williamsport, MD from 1986 to 1993, and recently moved to Park Historic Architecture in WASO. Lisa volunteered to be a mentor because she'd had

several outstanding mentors herself and because she believes strongly that preservation is as much about people as about buildings. She wants to spend as much time as possible in the field doing "hands on" work on buildings. She's looking forward to working with Kenneth Coss at San Juan National Historical Park, and with George Barrett at Klondike Gold Rush in Alaska. Lisa says that some of her most interesting projects so far have been building a new "piece en piece" vertical log winter/summer cabin for the U.S. Forest Service at Mt. Hood, OR; supervising the rehabilitation of the entry level lobby of the Washington Monument; and working on a 114 ft.-span covered bridge at Cuyahoga Valley National Recreation Area.

John Wood, Exhibits Specialist, Charles Pinkney, National Historic Site. John has worked ten years for the NPS. During that time, he has taken many courses in historic preservation, and served as supervisor or lead craftsman on approximately forty historic preservation projects. Some of his most interesting projects have been at Plum Orchard in Cumberland Island



National Seashore; Martin Luther King's Birth Home, and Andrew Johnson's Home. John looks forward to meeting and working with more NPS employees in other NPS sites. He will be working with Joseph Temple at Colonial NHP in Virginia and Sandra Eichmeyer at Petersburg National Battlefield. John is originally from Atlanta.

Susan Escherich is a historian in the Preservation Assistance Division, National Park Service.